Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/878375170

Downloaded on Mar 25, 2024

GustoSunday: Books

Best sellers

Compiled from data from independent and chain bookstores, book wholesalers and independent distributors nationwide.

FICTION

1. **A Perfect Life.** Danielle Steel. Delacorte, $28.
2. **Tom Clancy: Support and Defend.** Mark Greaney. Putnam, $28.95.
3. **The Heist.** Daniel Silva. Harper, $27.99.
4. **Big Little Lies.** Liane Moriarty Putnam/Amy Einhorn, $26.95.
5. **Invisible.** James Patterson, David Ellis. Little Brown, $28.
6. **The Book of Life.** Deborah Harkness. Viking, $28.95.
7. **The Lost Island.** Douglas J. Preston. Grand Central, $27.
8. **The Magician's Island.** Lev Grossman. Viking, $27.95.
9. **Severed Souls.** Terry Goodkind. Tor, $19.99.
10. **Top Secret.** Griffin/Butterworth. Putnam, $28.95.

NONFICTION

1. **America.** Dinesh D'Souza. Regnery, $26.99.
2. **One Nation.** Ben Carson. Penguin/Sentinel, $25.95.
3. **The First Family Detail.** Ronald Kessler. Crown, $26.
4. **In the Kingdom of Ice.** Hampton Sides. Doubleday, $28.95.
5. **Hard Choices.** Hillary Rodham Clinton. Simon & Schuster, $35.
6. **Blood Feud.** Edward Klein. Regnery, $27.99.
7. **The Grumpy Guide to Life.** Grumpy Cat. Chronicle, $12.95.
8. **Everything I Need to Know I Learned From a Little Golden Book.** Diane Muldrow. Random/Golden Books, $28.
9. **A Spy Among Friends.** Ben Macintyre. Crown, $27.
10. **The Invisible Bridge.** Rick Perlstein. Simon & Schuster, $37.50.

Editor's choice

The Essential Ellen Willis, *edited by Nona Willis Aronowitz; University of Minnesota Press, 523 pages ($24.95 paperback).* Among the revolutionary, quasi-revolutionary and merely new things that happened to the world during the late-'60s and early-'70s was an entirely new species of brilliantly disheveled American writer: the rock writer. We'll never really had them before. And then, suddenly it seemed, we had Lester Bangs, Richard Meltzer, Peter Guralnick, Robert Christgau, Nick Tosches, Greil Marcus, Dave Marsh, Robert Palmer, all manner of writers who took rock seriously enough to – in many cases – concoct life and prose styles completely congruent with its energies. Even if you couldn't share their musical fanaticism, you could be overjoyed at something new in American prose that was being born in front of our eyes.

There was one problem. It didn't seem that large at first but, over time, it turned into an immense drawback: it was, by and large, a boys club. There was, in retrospect, only one important woman fully bonded and indentured in the trade and present at the creation – Ellen Willis. Georgia Christgau was certainly visible but on a different path.

Willis died of lung cancer in 2006 at the age of 64.

In 2011, the University of Minnesota Press published a volume of Ellen Willis' rock writing – "Out of the Vinyl Deep: Ellen Willis on Rock Music." The university press' second posthumous volume of Willis' work – by far the more important one I think – is being published now as "The Essential Ellen Willis."

It is no slight to either the music or Willis' writing on the subject to say that Willis was so much more than the first rock critic, for instance, of The New Yorker. As befitted her exceptional minority, Willis went on to transcend her entrance through the cellar's back door and become one of the most significant writers in an era when rock writers turned into brilliant public intellectuals.

Ellen Willis – importantly – was all of that: feminist, activist, thinker, original, and, as her daughter and anthologist puts it in her introduction to Willis' work, the center of "an incredibly daring, restless, forty-year career." Well-excerpted here.

– Jeff Simon

Lucinda Franks tells all in memoir of marriage to Robert Morgenthau

Getty Images

Journalist Lucinda Franks said, "I will make love stop time" when she married Robert Morgenthau, nearly 30 years her senior.

MEMOIR

Timeless: Love, Morgenthau, and Me
By Lucinda Franks
Farrar, Straus and Giroux
362 pages, $27

BY KAREN BRADY
NEWS BOOK REVIEWER

When a young Lucinda Franks first laid eyes upon the powerful jurist Robert Morgenthau, she thought he had "a face like an elongated tear drop."

It was a face, albeit, that the Pulitzer Prize-winning Franks would come to cherish – in 1977, in her 30s, marrying the celebrated Morgenthau, a man nearly 30 years her senior, while telling herself, "I will make love stop time."

In her second memoir – "Timeless: Love, Morgenthau, and Me" – Franks touchingly recounts that stopped time with the feared-yet-revered Morgenthau who served until his 91st year as Manhattan district attorney and is, even today, of counsel to a private New York law firm.

"I am fortunate," Franks writes of her new book, "to have a husband who allowed me to do this: to talk about the personal life that he has kept so private during his 45 years as a public figure; to divulge the unknown stories behind his major cases; to reveal the intimacies, the foibles, the highs, and the lows of our 36 years together."

In this sense, "Timeless" has something for everyone – sections custom-made for lawyers, for historians, lovers, psychologists and more. Franks name-drops in parts, ushering us into the rarefied world of movers and shakers of the latter 20th century. She gossips. She kisses – and tells. She takes us into the heart of the Morgenthau family, with its historic lineage and its present-day members.

She is best when sharing some of the nuts and bolts of her own illustrious career as a journalist and author as well as Morgenthau's many triumphs as Manhattan DA. And she is great fun when telling us of how her marriage to "Bob" stunned virtually everyone in their respective orbits.

Theirs, she tells us, is "a marriage that was never supposed to happen," Bob being at the time "twice as old as I am, twice as worldly – and twice as close to life's end." Plus, she says, "he was part of the status quo, and I was a hippie." He was also only six years younger than Franks' father.

"When we were simply dating, eyes were raised," she recalls. "But a marriage? Between a public figure of the establishment and an outspoken peacenik some 30 years his junior? It just wasn't done. The mid-1970s was an era of divisiveness, of ageism, a time when the young still blamed the old for sending them to die in a useless war. We were a walking morality tale, an assault against nature..."

Franks wonders, in jest, if theirs is a case of "Methuselah marrying Little Bo Peep." It is one of the ways she tends to shortchange herself throughout this memoir – deferring, almost always, to Morgenthau's accomplishments when her own are substantial.

Her Pulitzer, co-won at the age of 24, came when she was working as a reporter for UPI. Morgenthau recommended her for a position at the New York Times, where she shone as an investigative journalist for years. It was she – while she was writing for Tina Brown's New Yorker, then Talk magazine – whom Hillary Clinton sought out following the Lewinsky scandal, and she who wrote the searingly beautiful, best-selling memoir, "My Father's Secret War."

But love, as they say, is blind and, if Franks finds Morgenthau nothing short of omnipotent, and flawless in most parts of his life, he IS the man who made the New York County DA's office number one in the nation – and the impetus, it is said, for TV's "Law and Order," with the series' first chief prosecutor, Adam Schiff, modeled on Morgenthau.

Known for handling some of the nation's highest profile cases – sometimes outside of his jurisdiction – Morgenthau was a force to reckon with, filling his office with assistants with promise, including the likes of Sonia Sotomayor, Andrew Cuomo and JFK Jr.

Terrorists, celebrities, titans of Wall Street and the New York social scene – Morgenthau didn't care how big you were if you had allegedly broken the law.

Franks, on the other hand, wasn't above doing so – even after starting to see Morgenthau seriously: "I continued to put myself at risk by participating in agitprop demos with the Black Panthers, the White Panthers, the Purple Panthers, whomever, or hung out with the straggle of hippies left over from the 1970s..."

That ended when Franks decided she "didn't want to sleep on icy stone church floors anymore. I was ready to feel safe, sheltered. I wanted to get my grandma's Victorian bed out of storage and cover it with a Wedding Star quilt..."

Much of "Timeless" has this home-movie quality, one this reader frequently found jarring. Franks – using a self-effacing little-girl voice one moment, and an in-command, adult voice the next – proceeds on this level as if nothing is off-limits.

For instance, she tells us one moment about a party whose guests include Jacqueline Kennedy – and in the next she recalls, seemingly verbatim, her (very private, one would think) differences with Morgenthau's five children from his first marriage, particularly during Franks' early months and years with them.

I immediately want to take the children's "side" – and cringe as well at Franks' insistence on letting us know, time and again and in detail, that "Bob," despite his age, is still virile.

Franks definitely peels more of the onion than this reader finds tasteful or necessary – and her inclusion, throughout the book, of mutually admiring conversations with her husband can be cloying:

"'You know you're the only one in the family who's always right,' I said. 'You know that, don't you? It doesn't matter whether it's directions to an inn or a criminal case, it's uncanny – the way you not only do the right thing, morally, but you get the little daily things right.'

'I'm not smart. You're the smart one.'

'Why would you ever think that?'

'Because I'm stupid, that's why.'"

But Franks also gives us the astonishing behind-the-scenes details of how Morgenthau's office seized a valuable painting that had been seized by the Nazis from the walls of the Museum of Modern Art – and how his discovery of a growing terrorist cell (that would later be identified as an al-Qaida headquarters) was ignored by authorities.

She is strong when she writes of the couple's illnesses – his melanoma, her breast cancer – and of her conclusion that the emotional reticence she finds in her husband is a form of post-traumatic stress disorder stemming from his World War II years as a young Navy officer whose ship was torpedoed off Algiers.

She is admiring yet measured when she writes about her own children by Morgenthau – Josh and Amy – one born in Morgenthau's 60s, one in his 70s. She is a bit of a drama queen (Morgenthau says living with her is "like going on Mr. Toad's Wild Ride") in that, she often declares her marriage in trouble – when all a reader can see is an easily rectified lack of communication.

But, then, marriage can be like that, and we are blessed to have this full accounting of Franks' – as Morgenthau will never write a memoir. He never looks back, he has said, only forward.

Karen Brady is a former News columnist.

Books in brief

CHILDREN'S

The Slug, The Rat *by Elise Gravel; Tundra Books, 32 pages ($10.99 optional). Ages 6 to 9.*

* * *

These droll books, perfect for reluctant readers, are both entertaining and informative and are the latest entries in "The Disgusting Critters Series" from an award-winning Quebec author-illustrator (following "The Fly" and "The Worm," published in March). A snippet of scientific fact (say, that the slug is a mollusk but doesn't have a shell) is followed by a picture of a snail with a dialogue box: "Ha ha! You're naked!" The information that a slug uses its two pairs of tentacles for seeing and the lower ones for smelling and tasting is accompanied by the legend, "I see you! You're a kid and you smell like broccoli." Creative license makes it all the more fun. (A slug breathes through a hole on the side of its body; that picture shows a slug blowing up a giant bubble with bubblegum with the legend "everyone's impressed when I do that.")

– Joan Wuitmore

FICTION

One Plus One *by Jojo Moyes; Pamela Dorman Books/Viking, 368 pages ($27.95)*

* * *

If you are the sort of reader who talks derisively of "chick lit" in that superior tone then you may not be swayed by the charms of Jojo Moyes' latest novel. But the delightful, comic "One Plus One" is as likable a book as you will come across this summer, light and funny, with surprisingly subtle commentary on how the income gap separates people emotionally as well as financially.

Moyes has a breezy, dialogue-driven style that drops you easily into the minds of her mismatched protagonists, who live on opposite ends of Great Britain's economic spectrum. Tech whiz Ed is a millionaire in danger of losing his business, his money and his freedom, due to accusations of insider trading. Ed is essentially a good guy, but his decision-making lately has been faulty. Nor is he a slick conspirator: Asked if he had mentioned his company's top-secret project launch to a woman he was sleeping with, his confused response is "No. Maybe. What is this?"

Jess, on the other hand, is used to financial crises because she's always in the middle of one. The single mom of bullied Goth stepson Nicky and math genius daughter Tanzie – their father has left them, claiming a nervous breakdown – Jess works two jobs. She's a house cleaner by day, which she mostly likes and works at the local pub by night.

Normally their paths wouldn't cross, but Jess cleans Ed's house, and Ed frequents Jess' bar and ends up drunk there. Then one night, Ed spots Jess, the kids and their large, smelly, drooling dog Norman next to a broken-down car by the side of the road. They are – or were – on the way to a math competition in Scotland.

Tanzie has been offered an almost-but-not-quite full scholarship to a prestigious school, and Jess hopes she can win the contest money to pay the rest of the tuition. Regretting the offer as soon as he makes it, Ed offers to drive them there.

Moyes stretches out the trip for dramatic effect; Ed can't go over 40 mph or Tanzie gets carsick. During the time on the road, the expected happens. Any fan knows a romantic comedy is only as good as its roadblocks, and Moyes sets up a few solid ones: Desperate Jess has secretly kept a roll of Ed's money, which she found in the taxi the night he left the bar drunk. Ed is unaware of this. Meanwhile, he's wary of getting involved with anyone when he could be facing prison.

Nicky and Tanzie also get chapters dedicated to their points of view, which round out the story nicely.

A few of the book's conceits don't quite make sense: Why doesn't Jess file police reports when Nicky is beat up? Why doesn't she sue her ex for child support when she's broke?

But Moyes makes up for these missteps with sharply drawn characters, genuinely amusing scenarios and a compelling warmth for all of these endearing misfits (even Norman).

"One Plus One" may be all formula, but it's a tried and true equation that reminds us that all sorts of people can add up to a happy family.

– Connie Ogle, Miami Herald

Copyright © 2024 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.

Powered by Newspapers.com